

Remarks/Arguments

Reconsideration of this application is requested.

Claim Status

Claims 1-20 were presented. Claims 1, 2, 8 and 14-17 are canceled, without prejudice, and claims 3-7 and 9-13 are amended. Claims 3-7, 9-13 and 18-20 are now pending.

Allowable Subject Matter

The allowance of claims 18-20 is noted and appreciated. Claims 3-7 and 9-13 are indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Each of claims 3-7 depends from claim 2, which depends from claim 1. Accordingly, each of claims 3-7 is rewritten in independent form to include all limitations of base claim 1 and intervening claim 2. Each of claims 9-13 depends from claim 8, which depends from claim 1. Accordingly, each of claims 9-13 is rewritten in independent form to include all limitations of base claim 1 and intervening claim 8.

In view of these amendments, claims 3-7 and 9-13 are now in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1, 2, 8 and 14-17 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by Shoujima (US 5,754,778). In response, claims 1, 2, 8 and 14-17 are canceled, without prejudice.

Claims 1, 2, 8 and 14-17 are canceled for the sole reason of facilitating and speeding the issuance of those claims already indicated as allowable. Applicant does not concede the substantive merits of the rejections and reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of these claims in subsequently-filed continuation application(s).

Conclusion

This application is now believed to be in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned to resolve any issues that remain

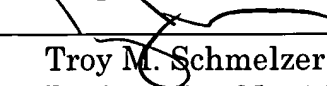
Appl. No. 09/923,265
Amdt. dated August 16, 2005
Reply to Office Action of July 15, 2005

Atty. Ref. 81800.0162
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after entry of this amendment. Any fees due with this response may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,
HOGAN & HARTSON L.L.P.

Date: August 16, 2005

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